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ABSTRACT

This paper chronologically presents a history of curricular development dating from the inception of King's College in 1754 through Columbia University's departmental offerings in 1953. The comprehensive study of curriculums is initiated with a review of the significance of rhetoric during the early period. Systematic examination of the growth of the English department includes numerous references to professors, courses, and degree requirements. Course requirements are also discussed. (RL)

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II

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

by Oscar James Campbell

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SOME SYSTEMATIC STUDY of English has formed a part of the curriculum of Columbia College since its formation as King's College in 1754. Many of the subjects now taught in various courses of the Department of English and Comparative Literature were then treated as aspects of the subject called Rhetoric. One of the seven liberal arts of the medieval schools, rhetoric held an even more important place in the Humanists' conception of a liberal education.

When they discussed rhetoric in its relation to schooling, the Humanists normally referred to a subject the nearest modern equivalent of which is English composition. But the subject had a broader scope than the typical freshman English course in a modern college. Composition in the Renaissance schools was concerned with verse as well as with prose, with letters as well as orations, and with the writing and appreciation of epic and pastoral, of tragedy and comedy. Humanist schoolmasters drew no sharp line between formal themes and orations or be-

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tween rhetoric and logic.[1] This was the conception of rhetoric current when King's College was founded, one that insured it a central place in the curriculum for over one hundred years.

The Laws and Orders of King's College, adopted on June 3, 1755, contained the following passage:

> The Pupils in each of their Turns shall be obliged, at Such times as the President shall appoint, to make Exercises in the severall Branches of Learning Suitable to their Standing both in Latin and in English, Such as Declamations, and Disputations on Various Questions Pro and Con; and frequent Theses and Syllogistical Reasonings.

One of the many duties of the early Presidents of the College was to direct and criticize the speaking exercises of each student and to give instruction both in oratory and in the study of such works of literature as would be of particular value in the preparation of their speeches. At Commencement each candidate for an A.B. or A.M. degree was required to deliver an oration, or to present "an essay, thesis or dissertation" which might be read. The students chose such subjects as "On Delicacy," "On Cheerfulness," or "On the Advantage of a Liberal Education." Even the subjects of the so-called orations were those treated by the English familiar essayists of the eighteenth century: "On the Usefulness of the Passions," "On Taste," or "On the Happiness of Connubial Life." In 1763 one of these essays was for the first time called a composition.[2]

This movement was accelerated when Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, first published in 1783, was adopted as the textbook in rhetoric. This volume deals with problems of composition and style in written discourse, and accepts as gospel the standards of taste prevailing in Blair's day, when Addison, Pope, and Swift were the sole approved models of English style.

In 1795 President William Samuel Johnson asked to be excused from further lecturing on "rhetoric and belles lettres." An annual grant to the College from the State of New York had so improved its finances that the Trustees were able to appoint the Reverend John Bisset, a Master of Arts from Aberdeen, to the new Professorship of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres—a title that may have been suggested by the title of Blair's admired textbook. This appointment marked the first formal recognition of the place of English Literature in the curriculum. As a result of the

[1] B. L. Joseph, *Elizabethan Acting* (London, 1951), pp. 20–22.

[2] Helen P. Roach, *History of Speech Education at Columbia College, 1754–1940* (New York, 1950), p. 7.

establishment of this post, the teaching of logic was for the first time in the history of the College separated from the teaching of English composition. For a brief period logic was added to the subjects taught by the Professor of Moral Philosophy.

In 1799 the grant from the state was discontinued and rhetoric, belles-lettres, logic, and moral philosophy again became the business of a single professor. On December 31, 1801, the Reverend John Bowden was elected to this chair, a position which he held until 1817. He taught the following courses in English: in the freshman and sophomore years, English grammar and reading; in the junior year, English composition and criticism, illustrated from the work of the best poets and prose writers of the ages and the declamation of pieces of the students' own composition; in the senior year, English composition, criticism of approved writers, universal grammar, and declamations.

Shortly after Bowden's death in 1817, the Reverend John McVickar was appointed to the same composite chair of Moral Philosophy, Rhetoric, Logic and Belles-Lettres, a post which he held for forty years. In 1818 he became also Professor of Intellectual Philosophy and Political Economy. Up to the year 1829 the correction of weekly compositions written by all the undergraduates remained one of the duties of the President of Columbia College, but in that year this burden was shifted to the already overloaded shoulders of Professor McVickar.[3] No wonder he was called by his colleagues "an elegant writer of wide and varied erudition." McVickar's annual salary was $2,500 with a supplementary grant of $500 a year for a residence.

John McVickar was well born. His father was a rich merchant. In 1800, at the age of thirteen, the boy matriculated in Columbia College, an institution then devoted almost entirely to the education of the gentry. His graduation address, entitled "Eloquence and Hamilton," displayed the intellectual and moral qualities that were to characterize his entire life. The first sentence of his oration announced its topic: "The boast of our college, the glory of our country has just fallen on the field of mistaken honor." It was naturally the moral lesson implicit in Hamilton's career that was uppermost in the young graduate's mind, for he was already headed for the ministry and a career as an eloquent preacher.

In his lectures on English literature McVickar was always the moralist

[3] The most reliable source of information about McVickar is an article in the *Columbia University Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (December, 1931), by Joseph Dorfman and Rexford G. Tugwell.

and the divine. The following excerpts from a student's lecture notes which have been preserved in the Columbiana collection give us a fair idea of the character of his critical pronouncements. One cannot of course be sure that the reports of Wheelock H. Parmly (Class of 1842) are completely accurate. But they are carefully organized and neatly transcribed, giving credence to the tradition that Professor McVickar dictated his lectures and expected his students to take down word for word everything that he said. Accurate or not, here are some of the sentences in Parmly's note book which caught my eye:

Of all literatures the English is the most intellectual, the most moral, and the most varied. It is the most intellectual, because there is more reason in it than in any other. The German has as much thought, but not so much good sense. It is the most moral. That which is not pure in English literature is like a blot on a fair page. The greatest names on the Continent are the most impure. . . . In England extreme licence marks youth; on the Continent it marks age. The same English poets that indulge in freedom in their youth, write with purity as they advance. Byron is almost the only exception to this, and he had lived so much in the South of Europe that he had almost ceased to be an Englishman. He was more of an Italian.

English literature is the most varied. It is written in four different dialects. Spenser wrote Old English; the Bible is written in the Sacred Dialect; Burns and Scott wrote Scotch, the Doric of English; Southey wrote pure English. Good writers are those who wrote the native Saxon. Bad writers we find even in such men as Sidney, whose great fault was copying Italian.

These opinions reflect in only slightly distorted form the self-righteous provincialism of the English middle class. Professor McVickar's views on the history of English literature were characteristic also of popular prejudices of his day. Of the literature written between 1729–1800 he had the low opinion which was widely held even in academic circles until about twenty-five years ago.

"During the period of seventy-one years," Parmly's notes continue, "England stood, as it were, without a literature. England lost her supremacy with but a few honorable exceptions, among whom were Johnson, Goldsmith and Burke. Warburton and Cowper were also exceptions." Of the period 1800–1841 he said, "The names are Scott, Byron, Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth." The failure to mention either Keats or Shelley is significant.

In 1857, the year in which the College moved to Forty-ninth Street, the Trustees carved up McVickar's broad domain into three professorships. The seventy-year-old McVickar was appointed Professor of the

Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion—a post he filled until his complete retirement in 1864. Two of the proposed posts were finally assigned to Charles Murray Nairne, who then became Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy and Literature. Nairne was a Scotsman, a graduate of St. Andrews in 1830, and the recipient of an M.A. from Edinburgh in 1832. He had the reputation of having been an eloquent preacher in Edinburgh, where he had been an assistant of the famous Doctor Thomas Chalmers. His main literary interest was the English Romantic poets.

He apparently did not exert himself unduly in the preparation of his lectures. Brander Matthews, whose undergraduate career spanned the years 1868–71, described the one-term course in English literature given by Nairne as follows:

> We were not introduced to the actual writings of any of the authors, nor was any hint dropped that we might possibly be benefitted by reading them ourselves. We had to procure a certain manual of English literature and to recite from its pages the names of writers, the titles of books and the dates of publication—facts of little significance and of slight value unless we happened to be familiar with the several authors as a result of home influence or of private taste. The manual prescribed for us was the compilation of a stolid textbook-maker by the name of Shaw; and it illustrated admirably the definition of history as "an arid region abounding in dates." [4]

The students in the freshman course in rhetoric, taught by a tutor, fared little better. "They also studied in a formal textbook providing detailed information as to names which had been bestowed upon the several devices employed in the art of composition. But there was little or no instruction in the art itself, in the actual practice of writing." [5]

In spite of the languid fashion in which Nairne conducted the work of his department, other academic duties were thrust upon him. From 1860–68 he acted as Professor of the Ethics of Jurisprudence in the law school; and from 1865 to 1876 he served also as Professor of History and Political Economy.

Professor Nairne was clearly a "character." His colleague, John Burgess, dubbed him a "son of a Scotch Laird of the Jacobite party," "the freak of the faculty," and a "quasi-British noble, quasi-orthodox ecclesiastic." [6] He looked like a popular caricature of a philosopher, for

[4] Brander Matthews, *These Many Years* (New York, 1917), p. 108.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] John W. Burgess, *Reminiscences of an American Scholar* (New York, 1934), p. 168. My characterization of Professor Nairne is based largely on Burgess's description.

he had a completely bald head and, in the later years of his academic service, a long white beard. He always wore tight trousers and a Prince Albert coat. In spite of his dressing thus carefully for the part, his ambitions seem to have been more social than pedagogic or philosophical. His large house in West Thirty-fourth Street near Seventh Avenue was, except for the President's house, the most frequented social center of the faculty. His colleagues thought it a "swell establishment and seem to have been impressed most of all with the white-gloved Negro who waited on the door and served as butler." He himself possessed an agreeable social manner, was polite, deferential to the point of shyness. His talk was more about food and drink, especially drink, than about Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, or Kant or even Dugald Stewart. His taste for Scotch whiskey was robust and discriminating. His ideals were those of an adept in all the amenities of high New York society. As a teacher he was a joke. He did not know his pupils one from another and usually gave them all the same mark.

The first course in Columbia College in the history of the English language was established in 1858 by George P. Marsh and soon became a prescribed course for the senior year. Marsh was followed in 1879 by Dr. Charles P. G. Scott, afterwards the etymological editor of the *Century Dictionary*, who served as an instructor in the field until 1884.

Nairne resigned his professorship on June 6, 1881, and was appointed Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and English Literature. The following autumn the Trustees split Nairne's post into two professorships, one of Philosophy, Ethics, and Psychology, and one of the English Language and Literature.

In 1882, Thomas Randolph Price was called to Columbia from the University of Virginia and became the first member of the faculty to bear the title of Professor of the English Language and Literature, although systematic instruction in both subjects had been given for almost a century. This appointment marks the formal beginning of the Department of English. A student of the classics at Berlin and Kiel when the Civil War broke out, Price had returned home to serve in the Confederate army as a captain of engineers. In 1867 he became a Professor of Latin and English at Randolph-Macon College. From the first years of his academic career he sought to establish the study of English on as sound a philological basis as that already reached in the study of the classics. In 1876 he succeeded Basil Gildersleeve as Professor of Greek at the University of Virginia, where he also taught Latin and Hebrew. In addition to his classical learning, he mastered six modern languages

and literatures. Some of his students in the South were sent to continue the study of their subject in Leipzig. Of the many whom he inspired to become teachers and scholars in the field of English, the late Professor Charles Baskerville of the University of Chicago was one of the most famous.

The coming of Price to the Columbia faculty marked the end of the long line of clergymen and philosophers who had been teaching belles-lettres (under one name or another) since the founding of the College. Although they were usually men of taste and high moral idealism, they were without a scholar's knowledge of either English letters or English linguistics. Price possessed perhaps the broadest intellectual equipment of any scholar on the Columbia campus in his day. He was well-read in history and psychology, and was a specialist in dramatic criticism. He was the author of many essays on Shakespeare, none of which, unfortunately, was ever published. The students spoke with awe of the mass of learning stored in his capacious mind. He stood for scholarship in its most severe, and yet its broadest and most humane sense. He was greatly respected by his colleagues in other universities and near the close of his career was elected president of the Modern Language Association.

During his first year at Columbia, Price reorganized and extended the courses offered in the field of English language and literature. The curriculum became an intelligently planned course of study, much more involved in systematic writing and rhetorical theory than the present undergraduate sequence of courses in Columbia College and much more firmly based on linguistic knowledge.[7] Since Bacon, Milton, and Byron were apparently studied with some thoroughness, it is surprising that of all Shakespeare's plays only *Macbeth* was prescribed.

[7] In 1883 the English curriculum for each of the four college years, with the textbooks prescribed, was the following:

Freshman Class: Barnes's *Higher English Grammar;* Quackenbos's *Rhetoric and Composition,* with practical exercises in writing English; the *Essays* of Addison; lectures on Thackeray; and lectures on the history of literature.

Sophomore Class: Lounsbury's *History of the English Language;* Morris's *Elementary Lessons of Historical English Grammar;* Quackenbos's *Rhetoric and Composition,* with practical exercises in writing English; one play of Shakespeare, *Macbeth;* and lectures on the history of literature.

Junior Class: Arnold's *Manual of English Literature;* Barnes's *Composition and Rhetoric,* with practical exercises in composition; March's *Anglo-Saxon Reader;* the *Essays* of Bacon; poetry of Milton and Spenser; and lectures on literature and rhetoric.

Senior Class: Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Primer and Reader;* Barnes's *Composition and Rhetoric,* with practical exercises in essay writing; Morris's edition of Chaucer; and lectures on historical grammar of Anglo-Saxon and the English language.

Professor Price, who himself taught all the classes in literature, was assisted by two junior appointees. The first, Charles P. G. Scott, A.M. and Ph.D., became instructor in Anglo-Saxon and gave all the courses in linguistics. The students resented his pedantry and his top-lofty attitude, accentuated, they thought, by his *pince-nez* and the black ribbon hanging ostentatiously from them. They called him "Great Scott" and expressed their hostility to him and his teaching so strongly that they practically forced his resignation in 1884. The second junior officer was John D. Quackenbos, A.M., M.D., who became tutor in Rhetoric and History, and taught all the courses in rhetoric and composition. During this period the regular exercises in the English language and literature continued to be required in the junior and senior years in spite of the considerable expansion of the elective system for upperclassmen which had been approved by the Trustees, under pressure from President Barnard, in June, 1880.

The offering in English underwent little change during the 1880s. In 1886 A. V. Williams Jackson was appointed an assistant in English and an instructor in Zend, the oldest language of Persia. Jackson had graduated from Columbia College in 1883. One of his classmates was Michael Pupin, who later became his brother-in-law. Even as an undergraduate Jackson gained the reputation of being an assiduous student, as the following jingle composed by one of his classmates attests:

> Abraham Valentine Williams J.,
> He studies all night and he studies all day.

In his senior year he chose Sanskrit as an elective. In 1885 he took his L.H.D. in course [8] and in 1886 his Ph.D. As a graduate student he studied English and Anglo-Saxon, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit and also Zend. When, in the fall of 1883, he received a fellowship which required some hours of teaching, he was assigned to the English Department to assist in correcting sophomore compositions. In 1884, upon Scott's resignation, he began to teach Anglo-Saxon and to lecture on Chaucer and Shakespeare.

When Jackson entered upon his career in the Department of English, Anglo-Saxon was a required course for all seniors in Columbia College and a thoroughly unpopular one. Indeed they had been taking out their hatred of the subject and of their still more cordially hated instructor in all sorts of rowdy behavior. They threw firecrackers and old gloves into the stove which heated the classroom and kept the class in an up-

[8] This was one of three L.H.D. degrees conferred by the Faculty of Arts of the College on examination.

roar by the continuous loud slamming of doors and windows. When Jackson went for the first time into this turbulent classroom, his colleagues crowded around the door, apparently to enjoy the usual tumult. But nothing happened. The boys remained perfectly silent, impressed at once by his rare personality. And during the many years that Jackson taught Anglo-Saxon his students continued to show him the deep respect and admiration that his great learning, joined to his personal charm and courtly manners, met from everyone who knew him.

In the spring of 1887, having been granted a fellowship for the study of the languages of India and Persia, he was granted leave of absence from Columbia for the following two years. Upon his return to the College in 1889, he was made instructor in Anglo-Saxon and the Iranian Languages, and in 1891 was promoted to Adjunct Professor of the English Language and Literature. In 1895 he was made a professor in the newly established department of Indo-Iranian languages. In spite of his new title he continued to teach some courses in the English Department until 1906, but he offered fewer and fewer English courses and more in Indo-Iranian.[9]

Professor Jackson was one of the greatest linguistic scholars of his generation and perhaps the most learned man ever to teach in Columbia. He was editor of the "Columbia Indo-Iranian Series," in which thirteen volumes appeared, and of a nine-volume *History of India*. Two of his most important volumes are *Zoroaster, Prophet of Ancient Iran*, and *Persia, Past and Present*. In spite of his vast learning, he was far from a pedant. He was a light and an ornament to every sort of social occasion, retaining as long as he lived the gracious manners of a gentleman of New York society of the 1880s.

In 1890 Seth Low became President of Columbia, then still a college of moderate size built within the narrow limits of a single city block. His ambition was to create out of this institution a university, great not so much in its buildings and other impressive physical features as in the superior quality of its faculty. One of his first projects was the establishment of a new professorship of literature, to be like the famous chair at Harvard filled successively by Ticknor, Longfellow, and Lowell. That is, his idea was not so much to intensify the work already offered in English literature as to stimulate a wide interest in literature of any and every sort. The literary distinction of George Edward Woodberry as a poet and essayist had attracted Low's attention, and he turned to

[9] For Jackson's further career see Chapter V, "The Department of General and Comparative Linguistics."

Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard for advice on Woodberry's qualifications for the position he had in mind. Norton's enthusiastic response was, "I know of no one of his generation whom I think so well-fitted and capable as he of occupying with success and distinction such a chair as you are proposing to fill." On this recommendation, Woodberry was appointed to the Faculty of Columbia College and in the fall of 1891 entered upon twelve years of teaching which were to prove the richest and the most influential in his whole life.[10]

Born in Beverly, a suburb of Boston, in 1855, from five generations of sea captains, Woodberry was reared in an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking. Inevitably he went to Harvard, where he graduated in the Class of 1877. Though as an undergraduate he studied philosophy rather than literature, he did attend one of Professor Child's courses in order to observe a distinguished linguistic scholar at work. Imaginative literature he read by himself. From a memorable course he took with Henry Adams on medieval life and law he learned a method in history and biography which he was to make his own. But the teacher who exerted the greatest influence upon him was Charles Eliot Norton, a critic of fine arts and literature in the tradition of John Ruskin. In his courses Norton emphasized in particular the relation of art to literature, to social progress and to morals. His son, Eliot Norton, wittily characterized his father's courses as "Modern Morals taught through Ancient Art." Norton was successful in establishing close companionship with Woodberry and other of his students whom he often entertained in his spacious residence on the large estate at "Shady Hill" on the outskirts of Cambridge. Norton's teaching was the source of Woodberry's belief that literature and poetry in particular were the expression of life itself and also of his efforts to make his life, his writing, and his teaching all of a piece. Woodberry paid tribute to the influence of the quiet, cultured teacher in a Phi Beta Kappa poem published in *The Harvard Graduates' Magazine* of September, 1913.

The undergraduate courses that Woodberry gave at the beginning of his career at Columbia were the following:

1. Eighteenth Century Literature, a two-hour lecture course, prescribed for sophomores.

[10] My account of Woodberry's career at Columbia is based on (1) John Erskine's *The Memory of Certain Persons* (Philadelphia, 1947); (2) *Addresses at the University Convocation in Honor of George Edward Woodberry*, May 12, 1948; and (3) *George Edward Woodberry, 1855–1930, An Appreciation by John Erskine*, with "A List of Writings" by and about him, compiled by R. R. Hawkins, New York Public Library, (New York, 1930).

2. Half-courses in (a) Spenser and the Elizabethan Poets, exclusive of drama, and (b) Milton and the Caroline Poets.
3. Nineteenth Century Literature.
4. With Professor A. V. Williams Jackson, English Drama to the Closing of the Theatres (1640), exclusive of Shakespeare. Woodberry described the course as "Language, Versification, and Method of dramatic poetry."

With Professor Jackson, Woodberry soon established a close and enduring friendship. The two supplemented each other admirably in their teaching as in their social contacts. Woodberry was uniformly serious and reticent while Jackson had a lightness of touch and highly developed social gifts.

In 1899 Woodberry's students organized a literary circle called "King's Crown" to hear talks by distinguished writers who were his friends. Every alternate meeting was held in the College Tavern, on a site now occupied by the Union Theological Seminary. Professors Jackson and Woodberry were always there and over a keg of beer drew the boys into talk on a high plane.

In his second Columbia year Woodberry gave two courses designed for graduate students—both in comparative literature. One was "The History and Theory of Criticism: Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Quintilian, Sidney, Boileau, Dryden, Lessing, Coleridge." The second was "The Practice of Criticism; a review of the greater works of literature, with specific original inquiries in particular epochs: Conferences and Dissertations." These courses were expressions of Woodberry's firmly held belief that Western European literature was a unit and that every great work of art emancipated itself from the accidents of time to find its place in a realm of pure spiritual significance.

To the students in Woodberry's first classes his dreamy, soft-spoken lectures (his voice was so low that what he said seldom could be heard by the students beyond the first few rows) seemed strange, even a little ridiculous. He was also so near-sighted that he had very little idea of what was going on in front of him. Just to see what this abstracted gentleman would do, the students one day started a riot. Woodberry's reaction to the row was simply to collect his notes and books and leave the classroom for his study. When President Low met Woodberry the next day, he said that he had heard that there had been a disturbance in Woodberry's class. Woodberry replied that there had been.

"What do you intend to do about it?" asked the President.

"Nothing," said Woodberry. "I have come to Columbia to lecture to students who I supposed wanted to hear me. The preservation of order is the business of the executive department."

"What do you suggest that I do?" asked Low.

"Guillotine them," was Woodberry's reply.

This sophomoric hostility of the students was short-lived, for they soon fell under the compelling charm of their teacher's beautifully phrased interpretations of whatever work of literature was his subject for the hour. He had a very sensitive ear for subtlety of verbal effects and for poetic rhythms. Poetry to him was not conversation, but music. However he always regarded the spirit and meaning of a work of more significance than the form.

The boys felt his power of carrying them into the ideal world which their teacher inhabited, and he became in time easily the most popular teacher in the College. John Erskine says that his discussion of the poets resembled "the art of a great musician who can interpret various composers each in his distinctive style." "When he spoke of Milton or of Walter Scott," Erskine continues, "he put us in the mood of those very different writers." [11] He was thus able to inspire his students with his own high enthusiasm for great literature and to arouse among undergraduates of the most diverse intellectual power and taste a personal loyalty which has seldom been equalled in any American college.

In the spring of 1891 Brander Matthews was invited to substitute for Professor Price, who was to be on leave from the College for the academic year of 1891–92. Brander (that is what everyone, including his students, called him) had never entertained the possibility of becoming a teacher, but after some persuasion from his friend Professor Hjalmar Boyesen and from President Low, he decided to try the experiment. So in October, 1891, he came to Columbia to conduct three courses, open only to seniors and graduate students. In the following spring the Trustees created for him a new professorship of literature, and in 1899 this title was changed to Professor of Dramatic Literature. A graduate of Columbia College in 1871, Brander had won, during the twenty years since his graduation, some popular success as a critic, a novelist, and a writer of light verse, and as an adapter of plays. An heir to a fortune, which in time he had to eke out with literary earnings, he had become a thorough cosmopolitan, proud of his membership in the Savile and Athenaeum clubs of London. In those clubs, as in whatever social group he found himself, his amused, slightly disillusioned views

[11] Erskine, *Memory of Certain Persons*, p. 93.

of men and matters, wittily phrased with a cigarette hanging loosely from his lips, always established him at the center of a group of fascinated listeners. His brilliance in conversation, joined with loyalty and devotion to his friends, had made him an intimate of Stevenson, Howells, Mark Twain, Kipling, William Archer, Brunetière, Coquelin, Henry Irving, and many other men of letters, both English and French. Indeed he was perhaps better known in the literary circles of London and Paris than in similar groups in New York.

Brander's career at Columbia was, to be sure, an important incident in the high comedy in which he had cast himself for the principal role. The description which Lloyd Morris gives of Brander's periodic entrance on the stage of the Columbia campus to join his departmental colleagues at Morningside Heights reveals the gusto with which he played his part:

> Twice each week a burnished coupe, drawn by fat old horses and piloted by a fat old coachman, set down in their midst an aging Cyrenaic, urbane, dryly malicious, often mocking, who was—like the gilded statue of Alma Mater—a distinctive campus landmark.[12]

The courses which he and no one else decided to offer were the following: Epochs of the Drama (Greek, Latin, Spanish, English, French and German); American Literature; [13] The History of Modern Fiction; and The Art of Versification.

None of these courses had ever before been offered at Columbia. Their addition to the English curriculum greatly extended its scope for all time and marked the initiation of the Department's tendency to deal as much with the immediate as with the remote in literature.

Brander's courses in the drama were his best and his most popular. He had an intimate knowledge not only of the history of American, English, and Continental drama, but also of the stages on which the plays had been produced and of their contemporary developments. In his criticisms he was a disciple of the French critic, Francisque Sarcey. Like him, Brander believed that a play does not really come to life until it is acted on the stage before an audience. Therefore he focused a large part of his attention upon the physical resources of the stage and the attitudes and expectation of audiences. As an expression of this in-

[12] Lloyd Morris, *A Threshold in the Sun* (New York, 1943), p. 81.

[13] Brander's statement that this was the first course in American literature ever offered in any American college is a mistake. Moses Coit Tyler had given such a course years before, first at the University of Michigan, later at Cornell.

terest he established and endowed the Columbia Dramatic Museum on the model of that of the Paris Opera. His strong French prejudices are shown in the courses he offered later; in 1895 one entitled French Dramatists of the Nineteenth Century, and in 1897 Molière and English Comedy. In addition to his courses in the drama, Brander also offered The History of Modern Fiction and The Evolution of the Essay.

In his lectures, particularly those in the drama, he spiced his wide knowledge of the theater with irony and wit. In every branch of literature and in other aspects of life he was a staunch conservative, remarking that whatever is contemporary is three-fourths temporary. Most of the time he was delightfully urbane, at least until men or ideas challenged his prejudices. Then he became a biting partisan. His courses in American literature were less popular and less significant than those in the drama. In his second field of interest his point of view was less original, and his conservatism more often vitiated his judgment.

Brander Matthews's influence upon the curriculum and the ideals of the English Department, particularly in its graduate work, has been formative. The two Brander Matthews Professors of Dramatic Literature, George C. D. Odell and Joseph Wood Krutch, have carried on and enriched the traditions in the teaching of the drama which he established. At the present time, four professors in the graduate division of the Department devote the major part of their time to instruction in the history of the drama, including its contemporary developments.

In 1891, one year after the establishment of the Faculty of Philosophy, the Department of English was divided into three separate, though cognate, departments: (1) English Language and Literature, headed by Price, with A. V. W. Jackson as Adjunct Professor; (2) Rhetoric, under Quackenbos; and (3) Literature. The work in the last department comprised what was later called Comparative Literature, and it was to supervise the offering in this field that Woodberry was brought to Columbia in 1891. The principles which governed the new division of subject matter brought some of the courses offered by Brander, himself a newcomer, into Woodberry's department. Woodberry, with the cooperation of Henry Osborn Taylor, offered two advanced courses for graduate students: Studies in the Mediaeval Epic and Studies in the English Romances.

The fact that the University authorities called two well-known men of letters to the Faculty to develop and extend the offerings in English had a profound influence upon the subsequent character of the Depart-

ment's personnel. Thanks to the traditions established by Woodberry and Brander Matthews, the teaching of English at Columbia has never overemphasized the importance of philological methods of study imported from Germany. France and its humane ideals of literary scholarship have remained the preferred model here.

The isolation of Woodberry and Brander in a separate department eventually brought into the open the smouldering hostility of the two men. Their antagonism was based on their radically different personalities and on their completely different ideals of teaching and living. Woodberry had advised against Brander's permanent appointment. Indeed he protested vigorously against it on the ground that his courses would be of no use to the students and would prove popular only for a short time. The causes of the open rupture were what Brander thought was Woodberry's arbitrary conduct of the Department, particularly his insistence upon making important decisions without consulting him, his supposed dissuasion of students from taking Brander's courses, and the unfavorable comments upon Brander's ability which he made to the students.

On May 3, 1897, President Low wrote to Woodberry asking that his differences with Brander be treated in a spirit of mutual consideration, adding that he would not tolerate the existence of a bipartisan department. He closed by telling Woodberry that he had better look to his laurels, meaning that he had of late published fewer poems and essays than he had formerly.[14] Woodberry's reply to this letter was vigorous. He insisted that his duties as head of the Department of Literature be defined and protected. He demanded that his headship be real and not merely titular, so that his advice and wishes might cease to be permanently ignored. He reminded the President of Brander's petition of November 15 of the previous year requesting that Woodberry be removed as administrative head—a queer way to show consideration for his chief. He also reminded the President that he had foretold the inutility of Brander's courses. His contention was that Brander took his college duties so lightly that he had ample leisure for copious writing for the magazines, while he, Woodberry, was so faithful to his manifold academic duties that he had been forced to refuse offer after offer from publishers and editors of journals. He therefore asked that Brander's hours of teaching be made equal with his, that is, that they be raised from

[14] This letter and the correspondence which follows are from the Columbia University Files.

six to nine class hours a week and that he be required to come up to Morningside five days a week instead of three. He further urged that his department be required to have weekly or fortnightly meetings which all members of the staff would have to attend. He bade the President settle these questions of policy at once. In response, Low wrote to Brander asking him to offer more hours of work and to see that all his courses "be more usefully directed in connection with the general scheme of the department." These changes Brander flatly refused to make.

By the fall of 1898 the tension between the two disputants had reached the breaking point. On September 19 Woodberry wrote to the President as follows:

> I must request you to communicate directly with Professor Matthews on all matters concerning him, he having explicitly forbidden me to address him. I shall, with your permission, conduct the department for the present without communication with him.

This open breach between the two men completely destroyed the normal functioning of the Department of Literature, so that it is not surprising that on October 12, 1899, the President informed Woodberry that its organization was suspended. He was to refer all students who wished to study with Brander to him but to confine his own administrative direction to the work of the three assistants formerly assigned to the department. Early in the following month, the President asked Brander to resign. The latter replied under the date of November 9, 1899: "I cannot consider for a moment your suggestion that I resign. Under no circumstances will I do so. If I leave the University it must be because I am formally dismissed." However the President's curt request clearly gave Brander pause. On November 12 he wrote Woodberry admitting that in a conversation with him in the preceding spring he had used "language of exceeding plainness." He now, six months later, withdrew his remarks and expressed his regret for using them—a little late for an apology.

Since the President did not wish to ask the Trustees to dismiss Brander, he was forced to find another way out of the impasse caused by the mutual hostility of the two professors. Drawing upon his statutory powers, he merged the Department of Rhetoric and Composition with the Department of English Language and Literature. He then permanently abolished the Department of Literature and substituted

for it a Department of Comparative Literature. Woodberry was named head of the new department, with Joel Elias Spingarn as tutor and John Garrett Underhill and Lewis Nathaniel Chase as assistants.

In explanation of these changes, President Low wrote Woodberry on December 8, 1899, that the Department of Literature had been broken up without any attempt to distribute its work, that Woodberry's undergraduate and graduate courses were to continue as before, but that the Department of English was thereafter to be at liberty to give courses substantially the same as Woodberry's "because," the President observed, "in my opinion two courses under the same title delivered by different men for all practical purposes would be different courses." However, Woodberry was asked to change the description of his courses in such a way as to indicate their comparative nature. He acceded, describing two courses in the field of nineteenth-century English literature as "English literature from 1789 to the death of Tennyson, with some attention to Romanticism on the Continent," and his course in Elizabethan literature as "English literature from the birth of Shakespeare to 1660, with some attention to the character of the Italian Renaissance."

The President then addressed himself to the other party in the dispute. He assigned Brander to the enlarged Department of English and advised him that outside of the field of dramatic literature "your courses should be college courses." In January, 1900, Low obtained the Trustees' consent to the change in Brander's title from Professor of Literature to Professor of Dramatic Literature. Thus the President sought to obliterate all traces of the ill-starred Department of Literature.

But this liberal charter under which the two sister departments were to operate soon proved to be the source of continual friction between them. In spite of Low's clear statement that Woodberry's undergraduate work was to continue as before, a movement originated in the English Department to limit him to graduate instruction in comparative literature, on the ground that only students able to read the foreign languages concerned could properly take such courses. Woodberry complained that in thus seeking "to take away my literary instruction in English as my almost exclusive function, you take away the chief reason for my position." This was a just statement. Woodberry's great popularity as a teacher had always been in his undergraduate courses in English literature, and in them lay his great service to the University and to American literature. His work with graduate students, however, was by no means negligible. In February, 1900, he reported the candi-

dates for advanced degrees in the Department of Comparative Literature as follows:

	Men	*Women*
Candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy	13	2
Candidates for the Master of Arts	10	4
Special Students	1	4
Students not in Residence but at work on their dissertations	6	

His best students were already producing excellent theses such as the following: J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance;* Frank W. Chandler, *Romances of Roguery;* and John Garrett Underhill, *Spanish Literature in the England of the Tudors.* A little later there appeared John Smith Harrison's *Platonism in English Poetry of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,* Horatio S. Krans's *Irish Life in Irish Fiction,* Lewis N. Chase's *The English Heroic Play,* and Martha P. Conant's *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century.* By contrast, only one dissertation was completed in the Department of English during these years: Ferris Greenslet's *Joseph Glanvill,* written under Professor Price.

Woodberry, for his part, did not accept without vigorous protest the unwise privilege granted to the English Department of duplicating courses given by him and other members of his department. Moreover, he assumed that he still possessed the authority to supervise all work offered in literature which had been his when Professor of Literature. Consequently on March 6, 1900, he protested against the appointment of William Peterfield Trent to the chair of English Literature in Barnard College on the ground that he had been assured that he would be consulted in the matter and that the appointment was unfit. When Trent was given four half-courses in English literature covering the field from 1625 to 1832, Woodberry had sounder grounds for grievance, for they directly paralleled courses given by him and Chase. The competition was clearly intentional and gave some warrant for Woodberry's complaint that the English Department was trying "to exclude and confine me." Woodberry's objection to Trent's appointment turned out to be unjustified, for he proved to be a man of sound learning and an effective and popular teacher. Educated at the University of Virginia and the Johns Hopkins University, he had in 1888 become Professor of English at the University of the South and editor of *The Sewanee Review.* His friend, Theodore Roosevelt, introduced him to Brander Matthews, at whose instance he was called in 1900 to a post in Barnard

College. However, from the first a large part of his work was with graduate students and soon he was playing an important part in developing the work in that branch of the Department. Although he lectured upon almost all the periods of literature from 1660 to mid-Victorian days, his two main interests became Milton and Daniel Defoe. The Milton who meant most to him was the author of the *Areopagitica*, of the tracts, and of *Samson Agonistes*, as well as of *Paradise Lost*. In 1899 he published *John Milton: A Short Study of His Life and Works*.

On December 9, 1908, at the University's celebration of the 300th anniversary of the poet's birth, Trent suggested to President Butler that Columbia undertake to publish the first complete edition of Milton's works. The President accepted the idea with enthusiasm and the project was planned with Trent as editor-in-chief. The latter at once enlisted the cooperation of many of his colleagues and of other Milton scholars throughout the country. After the failure of Trent's health in 1926, Professor Frank Allen Patterson succeeded to the editorship. The immense work, consisting of eighteen volumes and a two-volume index, was finished in 1938, just twenty years after its inception. It contained all the poetry acknowledged by Milton and many scraps found in his manuscripts, also the great prose works and every one of his pamphlets, articles, letters or portions of letters, wills, and marginal notes. The appendices contain works sometimes attributed to Milton and some newly found essays.

The later years of Trent's life were devoted to an investigation of the life, writing, and times of Daniel Defoe. His knowledge of this field enabled him to accumulate a remarkable collection of books and pamphlets relating to the man and his period. It is to be regretted that Columbia allowed this collection, indispensable for students of Defoe and his times, to go to the Boston Public Library. Trent published in 1916 a brief introduction to Defoe's work entitled *Daniel Defoe and How to Know Him*. At his death he left an extensive bibliography of Defoe and an equally extensive account of his life and work, still unfortunately unpublished. With John Erskine, Stuart P. Sherman, and Carl Van Doren he edited *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, to which he contributed a number of chapters. His belief that the significance of America lay in its revelation of the spiritual aspects of the national life has exerted a profound influence on subsequent scholarship in American literature.

As a teacher Trent was distinguished largely for his ability to communicate to his students his enthusiasm for Milton or indeed for any

work he happened to be talking about. His reading aloud, in the grand orotund manner, of Milton, Dryden, or Pope was an experience his students will never forget. His standards of taste were developed in a world that is gone, and his type of bookish man is now almost extinct. For his ecstatic delight in a calf-bound book or in a torn pamphlet made him no mere bookworm. He possessed the urbanity and geniality of a gentleman-scholar of the old school. The study and teaching of Milton has been ably continued at Columbia by his students, Professors Frank A. Patterson, William Haller, and Donald Clark, and by Professor Marjorie Nicolson, who joined the departmental staff in 1941.

When Professor Price died on May 7, 1903, Nicholas Murray Butler, who had become President of the University the year before, asked Professors Carpenter and Matthews to suggest plans for the reorganization of the Department. The former advised the appointment of (1) a scholar in Old and Medieval English, and (2) a man with an established reputation in research, "as Trent is the only member of the Department who has made his mark as a scholar." Graduate students in English, he continued, still go elsewhere "and are wholly justified in so-doing for neither our instructors nor our students have yet done research work of any special value, and their standing in the world of scholars is yet to be made.[15]

Both Brander and Carpenter recommended that all of Woodberry's undergraduate courses in Comparative Literature be dropped, partly on the ground of duplication of courses in the English Department. Carpenter suggested tentatively that half of Woodberry's work could be offered in the English Department. He then proceeded to describe what the character of graduate work in Comparative Literature should be and in so doing charted the course of much that is very modern in literary study, notably the contemporary preoccupation with myth and the Freudian and other psychiatric interpretations of works of art. He explained that it should deal with the following subjects:

1. The origins of literature in folk-lore and myth, a study closely related to Comparative Religion.
2. The psychological origins of literary expression.
3. The historical study of literary movements.
4. The investigation of great types of literature. (This had been one of Woodberry's main interests, as witnessed by the great popularity of his course on the epic.)

[15] Columbia University in the City of New York, *Letters Relating to the Organization of the Departments of English and Comparative Literature* (New York, 1903).

5. The definition of the various species or genres and a determination of their interrelations.

He expressed the further opinion that the Department of Comparative Literature should be kept separate from any special department of language or literature. Since no single scholar could possibly know enough to head such a department, it should be administered by a board composed of representatives of the Department of Anthropology, the Division of Modern Languages, the Department of History, and the Department of Philosophy. The number of courses in such a department should be few and of a distinctly advanced nature.[16]

Wise though this program was, and though partly adopted in practice, its philosophy spelled the end of that undergraduate instruction of Woodberry's which he most loved and which had gained him his great reputation as a teacher of young men. Woodberry saw the writing on the wall clearly enough. On March 6, 1900, just after he had been shunted off into a Department of Comparative Literature, he had written to Low saying that if Low should cease to hold the presidency, his own position "would not be worth a year's purchase." His conviction proved prophetic. From 1902 on, Woodberry had no friend at court. Butler was an admirer and friend of Brander's and was by nature unable to discern the virtues half-hidden in a shy, poetic nature like Woodberry's. The Trustees, on Butler's advice, refused in 1902 to provide money for the salary of Lewis Chase, the tutor in Comparative Literature. This salary had been paid by Low personally, but Woodberry felt it an imposition to take the money from him after he had resigned from the presidency. Although H. H. Flagler agreed to pay the disputed salary out of his own pocket, Butler refused to accept the offer, which he said would provide funds to pay a tutor to duplicate courses given by the English Department. In view of the fact that this department was itself responsible for the duplication, Woodberry felt that Butler's action was completely unjust. Through some channel the daily newspapers became familiar with the situation and gave it publicity. Five hundred undergraduates, strong Woodberry partisans, gathered and with great enthusiasm pledged the money needed for the tutor's salary.

But the publicity infuriated Butler, who on Wednesday, May 7, 1902, had Woodberry on the carpet and lectured him for an hour and a half. He made four principal demands of him: that he cooperate more fully with the English Department; that he cease criticizing his col-

[16] *Ibid.*

leagues to his students; that he stimulate no more newspaper comment on the actions of the President (Woodberry denied that he was in any way responsible for the publicity); and, finally, that he stop developing subordinates in his department—that is, that he make no effort to extend and develop his work in Comparative Literature.

The next year Butler assigned Woodberry and Doctors Spingarn and Chandler, tutors in Comparative Literature, to the Division of Fine Arts, at the same time instructing Woodberry to give his courses in the English literature of the nineteenth century and in the history and theory of criticism under the auspices of the English Department, and suggesting that he offer, under the Department of Fine Arts, some courses in which he would present literature solely from its aesthetic side. This absurd banishing of his teaching into the corner of a foreign department was for Woodberry the last straw. He asked and received a leave of absence for the academic year 1903–4, and on January 17, 1904, he sent his not too cleverly disguised forced resignation to Butler, saying simply and without a touch of rancor "It has long been my conviction that I shall best consult my usefulness and my private happiness by returning to literary work."

George Woodberry's career at Columbia forms a melancholy chapter in her history. Granted that he was shy, sometimes secretive and suspicious; granted that as an executive officer he was sometimes arbitrary and irritating, particularly to a person like Brander, who was not lacking in self-esteem; still, he had much to bear from the prima donna with whom he was fated to be bound during most of his life at the University. The fact remains that the Administration was not clear-sighted and ingenious enough to protect and liberate one of the greatest teachers of literature of his day. Nevertheless, his influence upon the teaching of English at Columbia had been too indelibly stamped to be erased by his departure in 1903. The widely imitated Columbia College course in great books, devised by John Erskine and now required of freshmen as Humanities A and in an advanced form as the Colloquium on Important Books, was a direct result of Woodberry's belief that all great literature was at one in expressing the enduring spiritual qualities of humanity. And Mark Van Doren in his course, The Art of Poetry, has carried on in their essentials the traditions of methods of Woodberry's teaching. Van Doren's short description of the course might have been written by the master himself: "A study of long and short poems, with special attention to tragedy and comedy as forms in which the human understanding states itself."

Ever since Brander had begun his career at Columbia he had refused to admit women to his courses on the drama. "For obvious reasons," he wrote to the President in 1903, "women must be excluded from courses in the drama," though he and his colleagues went on record that year as believing that one of the great needs of the Department was the establishment of more courses open to women. In the spring of 1906 Butler began to remonstrate with Brander over his refusal to admit women into these courses, remarking that "There is a serious handicap and an unfortunate alienation of public sympathy in closing any graduate courses to women." On October 15, 1906, Brander protested a recent action of the Faculty of Philosophy which denied a professor the right to close any graduate course to women. He explained that the theme of many a great drama is a problem of sexual ethics and with a group of men he was able to stimulate free discussion on subjects of that sort. If women should be admitted to his courses, the men would shut up and he would have to work out a new method of instruction, a well-nigh impossible task for a man lacking the comparative flexibility of middle age. As an alternative, he suggested that he offer six to ten lectures for women in which the underlying principles of dramatic art would be set forth. When Butler rejected this proposal, Brander compromised by giving one course open to women and one from which they were excluded. In the latter course he was free to tell his anecdotes and recount his experiences with the Great, which became more and more the staples of his none-too-well-organized talk. This attitude of Brander's was but one evidence of the antifeminist attitude which prevailed in the Department almost until the present. Women were often actively discouraged, particularly from taking advanced graduate work. The temper of the Department on this question was for years monkish.

It will be recalled that when the Department of English was split up into three cognate departments in 1891, one of the resulting divisions was called the Department of Rhetoric and Composition. Quackenbos was placed in charge of this work, and in the same year Charles Sears Baldwin joined the staff as tutor in Rhetoric. In 1893, George Rice Carpenter was appointed Professor of Rhetoric and English Composition to replace Quackenbos, who was on leave of absence prior to his resignation in 1894. Clarence Walton Vail was also brought in as an assistant.

In 1894, Baldwin was promoted to an instructorship in Barnard College. Though he did most of his teaching there, he collaborated with Carpenter in organizing freshman, sophomore, and junior courses in composition in Columbia College. In 1895 he was called to Yale, where

he taught the art of writing for fifteen years. Because of his gaiety and a discerned physical likeness, his Yale students called him "Shakespeare" Baldwin. While at New Haven he published two widely used textbooks for college classes in composition: *A College Manual of Rhetoric* (1902) and *Composition Oral and Written* (1909). On his return to Columbia as a Professor he resumed his teaching of composition, gave a course for graduate students in The College Teaching of English Composition, and one entitled Development of the Theory of Composition. In this latter course he surveyed classical and medieval theories of rhetoric and poetic. His most important scholarly publications were the products of this course: *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic* (1924) and *Mediaeval Rhetoric and Poetic*. A third volume on the Renaissance was left half completed at his death on October 23, 1935.

Professor Baldwin's Catholic Christian spirit, nourished in the doctrines of St. Thomas, found its natural home in medieval literature. His *Three Mediaeval Centuries of Literature*, a sympathetic account of the Middle Ages, was a stimulus to the development of sound medieval studies in many American colleges. In the last years of his academic career he derived the greatest satisfaction from teaching Chaucer to the undergraduates of Barnard College. As a teacher of composition, Professor Haller remarks, "He brought Aristotle back into the classroom and thereby made Freshman English once more alive and interesting." [17] Baldwin thought of himself as a teacher rather than as a scholar, for he conceived it to be his main duty to bring to students the great intellectual and spiritual tradition which he cherished more than his own life.

Baldwin's rhetorical interests have been ably carried on by Professor Donald Clark in his volume *Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance* (1922), and in *John Milton at St. Paul's School*, a study of ancient rhetoric in English Renaissance education. His latest book, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education*, is in press. The present offerings of the English Department in the history and theories of criticism are more meager than at any time since its earliest days.

It has already been mentioned that George Rice Carpenter came to Columbia in the fall of 1893 as head of the Department of Rhetoric and English Composition.[18] Born in Labrador, where his parents were

[17] William Haller, "Charles Sears Baldwin," *Columbia University Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4 (December, 1935), pp. 427–29.

[18] This account is based on William T. Brewster's essay on George Rice Carpenter in the *Columbia University Quarterly*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (June, 1909), pp. 309–17.

missionaries, he was graduated from Harvard College in 1886. As winner of the Rogers Fellowship he spent the next two years studying abroad, chiefly in Berlin and Paris. When called to Columbia, he was Assistant Professor of English at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he had written and published *Exercises in Rhetoric and English Composition.* His first few years on Morningside were taken up with the organization of his department.

Carpenter brought a fund of new enthusiasm to the work of the Department and also a wealth of new ideas. His first innovation was the introduction of the daily theme into the required freshman course in English composition. This discipline was the invention of Professor Barrett Wendell of Harvard. He believed that a student, by discovering what distinguished each day from all its predecessors—and by describing its uniqueness—sharpened his faculties and learned to make his writing a natural expression of his personality. The student also learned to be concise, for the theme he wrote five days a week was prescribed to be exactly one page—and no more—in length.

Although the method of the daily theme has not proved successful everywhere and is no longer standard practice in freshman English courses, Carpenter made the routine a rewarding experience for the pupils through his understanding of their personalities and his resourcefulness in showing them how to improve their writing. While the students were at work on a carefully supervised long essay—to which the whole second semester of the freshman course was devoted—Carpenter analyzed the style of certain English and American authors to serve as models. As a by-product of these lectures Carpenter edited for school and college use a long series of texts taken from the works of some of the subjects of his talks. In 1897 he published a volume, *Principles of English Grammar,* which for years was widely used as a textbook.

In addition to his teaching of composition, Carpenter joined Professor Matthews in a course in American literature and wrote two excellent biographies of American authors: a *Life of Whittier* (1903) and a book on *Walt Whitman* (1909). His later courses dealt with literary criticism: The Theory of Literary Criticism and The Theory of English Usage. His interests in literature were broad enough to include writers as far apart in spirit and in time as Dante and Ibsen. He translated Boccaccio's *Life of Dante* and Ibsen's *The Lady From the Sea,* and wrote an excellent essay on Ibsen for *Scribner's Magazine.*

When the work in English literature and rhetoric was merged late in

1899, Price became chairman and Carpenter secretary of the enlarged Department. At Price's death in 1903, the senior Professors—in response to President Butler's request for suggestions—advised against the appointment of another administrative head. They recommended, instead, that the duty of presiding at meetings of the Department be discharged by the professor of longest service, and that the officer responsible "for executing the policies determined by the professors be called secretary." Carpenter was the first to hold this office and served in this capacity until his death in 1906. His successor, Ashley Thorndike, was designated Executive Officer in 1911, when this title was officially assigned to the administrative representative of every university department.

Carpenter made a profound impression upon both students and colleagues by his extraordinary gentleness and patience. His courtesy, his humor, and his tact were unfailing. He was an excellent scholar, widely read and accurate, and a critic of rare sensibility. He loved study for its own sake and assumed an almost mystical attitude toward research. As a teacher, he commanded the respect and affection of his students. He was quite without vanity. His modesty, his selflessness, and his punctilious consideration were revealed in all his contacts with his colleagues and indeed in all his human relationships. His library has formed the nucleus of the Carpenter Library, the large collection of books housed in a spacious hall in Butler Library which serves as the special reading room for graduate students of English.

In March, 1904, Jefferson Butler Fletcher was appointed Professor of Comparative Literature to succeed Woodberry, and Dr. Joel Spingarn was promoted to Adjunct Professor in the same subject. Fletcher had received the degrees of A.B. and A.M. from Harvard in 1887 and 1889, respectively, and after several years of European study returned to Harvard to offer courses in Italian, Spanish, and English, and later in comparative literature. As a condition of his appointment on Morningside Heights he acquiesced in the wishes of the Department of English that courses in the Department of Comparative Literature be open only to graduate students and he decided therefore to emphasize the historical side of literary study.[19] The curriculum offered in the first year of his chairmanship reflected this idea. Fletcher offered (1) the comparative study of literature, (2) European Literature in the Full Renaissance, and (3) a seminar, The Elizabethan Drama in Relation to its Sources. Adjunct Professor Spingarn offered (1) The Theory and Practice of

[19] Cf. Jefferson B. Fletcher, "The Department of Comparative Literature," *Columbia University Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, No. 1 (December, 1910), pp. 62–66.

Criticism in Modern Europe, (2) European Literature during the Later Renaissance, and (3) two seminars, Classicism in Modern Literature and The Tradition of Chivalry in Modern Literature. Since it was obviously impossible for two men to cover the entire field of European literature, the department had to count on the generous cooperation of professors from other divisions—especially Matthews in the drama, Trent in the eighteenth century, Calvin Thomas in German and English relationships, and W. W. Lawrence in medieval literature.

Although a reasonable number of students elected Comparative Literature as a major subject and a smaller number from other fields chose it as a minor subject, this Department's closest affiliation had from the start been with the Department of English, just as the best opportunities for teaching the subject were in English departments throughout the country. For these reasons, in 1910, the Department of Comparative Literature accepted the invitation of the Department of English to form "a worthy coalition" to be known as the Department of English and Comparative Literature, a title by which the Department is still described. A joint committee from the two staffs, composed of Fletcher, Lawrence, and Spingarn, was thereupon formed to supervise the consummation of the union, which was described as largely a matter of administrative expediency.

Until his retirement and indeed for two or three years afterwards, while he was Professor Emeritus in Residence, Fletcher continued to give his lecture course, The French and Italian Renaissance, with only occasional references to Spain and England. His other principal course was entitled Dante and Mediaeval Culture, in which he treated the great poet's work not so much as a culmination of medieval thought as a harbinger of the Renaissance. He also offered, every other year, a half-course in Spenser and a seminar in the Renaissance for students writing their dissertations in this comparative field. His principal publications were *Religion of Beauty in Women* (1911), *Symbolism of the Divine Comedy* (1921), and (1931) a metrical translation of the *Divine Comedy*.

Fletcher always read his lectures from a carefully written manuscript. Not even on informal occasions did he trust himself to speak extemporaneously. When he printed the lectures delivered in his Renaissance course in a volume entitled *Literature in the Italian Renaissance* (1934), he conscientiously wrote an entirely new set of lectures for his course, believing that to repeat in a lecture anything his students could read in his book would be to cheat them. This was but one of

many examples of his intellectual honesty. No man had a higher sense of honor or a more gracious courtesy than Fletcher. He was a model for his students in humane living no less than in humane scholarship.

Although Spingarn violently opposed the amalgamation of the Departments of English and Comparative Literature—a move which he asserted had been "dictated solely by a deadly mechanical routine, miscalled efficiency" [20]—he promised friendly personal cooperation with his new colleagues. However, he gave notice that he refused to recognize their authority over his own work. In other words, he insisted on remaining completely independent of them. His intransigent attitude naturally raised insoluble problems for the Executive Officer of the joint Department, as Thorndike made clear in a letter to Butler of November 18, 1910. Spingarn, he wrote,

> refuses to recognize the authority of the Department or to serve on its committees or to have anything to do with it officially. . . . It seems clear that it is an undesirable condition and one detrimental to the efficiency of the Department for one member to regard himself as outside of its authority and co-operation.[21]

The President promptly called upon Spingarn to avoid the possibility of Trustee intervention by coming to a satisfactory understanding with the Department. After some delay, this was effected early in January, 1911, and, to the parties immediately concerned, the incident appeared closed. What Thorndike did not know at the time, however, was that a sharp disagreement had arisen between Spingarn and Butler in the course of an interview a few days earlier.

The dispute grew out of Spingarn's resentment over the abrupt disposition made of a resolution he had introduced at the December meeting of the Faculty of Philosophy. Spingarn had proposed that the Faculty "place on record its sense of the academic services" of Harry Thurston Peck, who had recently been forced to resign as Professor of Latin for reasons unconnected with his scholarship. On motion of Dean Russell of Teachers College the resolution had been tabled without debate. Butler had not been present at the meeting and apparently learned about the incident for the first time at the interview mentioned above when Spingarn showed him a letter of protest he was planning to send to Russell. The President evidently expressed his displeasure at the idea (or possibly at the tone) of the letter in a way that moved the

[20] *A Question of Academic Freedom, Being the Official Correspondence between Nicholas Murray Butler . . . and J. E. Spingarn . . . etc.* (New York, 1911), p. 6.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Professor to make a sharp rejoinder. The next communication Spingarn had from Butler was a notification on January 16 that the Trustees' Committee on Education had decided "that it is inexpedient to maintain a second Professorship of Comparative Literature" and were recommending to the full board that Spingarn's position "be discontinued from and after June 30 next." [22]

At this sudden turn of events, conciliatory influences were brought to bear, and with some promise of success. At an interview with Spingarn on the 26th, the President seems to have indicated a readiness to urge the Trustees' Committee to rescind its action. He advised Spingarn to write a formal reply to the letter of the 16th, presumably for the purpose of acknowledging willingness to cooperate with the work of the Department.

The reply, dated January 30, must have been a shock to Butler. Instead of obliging with the placatory gesture the President was evidently awaiting, Spingarn challenged the legal and moral right of the University to terminate his contract, defended his own conduct at every point, and clearly implied that he was being ousted because of the Administration's dislike of the Peck resolution. Butler vigorously denied that any connection existed between that resolution and the decision to eliminate Spingarn's professorship. The succeeding correspondence between the two men widened the breach beyond the possibility of repair. At their meeting on March 6, 1911, the Trustees voted to relieve Spingarn of all his academic duties as of that very date and to abolish his chair on the following June 30.[23]

At this distance it seems unfortunate that the Trustees' Committee did not reconsider its action after Spingarn had withdrawn from the position which prompted it. Since he received the notice of the termination of his professorship while he was in the midst of the squabble that grew out of the tabling of the Peck resolution, Spingarn naturally inferred that the exercise of his clear right to introduce such a resolution was one of the reasons for his dismissal. In any case, he gave prominence to this interpretation in his subsequent efforts to stimulate the press to make his ouster the occasion for an attack on the dictatorial policies of President Butler. The evidence of the correspondence, taken in its entirety, strongly suggests, however, that the Peck resolution was much less of a deciding factor in the final decision to drop Spingarn than cer-

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7, 15–16, 22n. Spingarn's protest to Russell was not sent.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 16–26.

tain statements regarding the President which the Professor included in his letters of January 30 and February 8.[24]

After the rupture of his connection with Columbia, Spingarn continued to advise his former graduate students, who went eagerly to his country estate for conferences. Later he became a member of the publishing firm of Harcourt, Brace and Howe. His interest in the American Negro led him to take an active part in the foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 1913 he established the Spingarn Medal, awarded annually to a Negro of outstanding achievement.

In the field of literary criticism, particularly in the period of the Renaissance, Spingarn's works remain the standard. His most distinguished works are his *History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (1899) and the *New Criticism* (1911). In this latter work he expounded and developed the aesthetic theories of Benedetto Croce and in so doing became a formative influence upon the large and effective groups of contemporary "new critics," a term clearly derived from the title of Spingarn's book.

For nearly seven years following Fletcher's death on August 17, 1946, no member of the Department held the title of Professor of Comparative Literature. In the spring of 1953, however, the major interests of two men in this field were recognized by appropriate changes in title, Professor Emery Neff and Associate Professor Maurice Valency being designated respectively as Professor and Associate Professor of Comparative Literature. On July 1, 1953, Enrico de'Negri, previously Professor of Italian, transferred his activities to the Department of English as Professor of Comparative Literature.

In the interim, Fletcher's important courses were continued under new auspices. Valency, who joined the staff as a lecturer in 1943, has been giving both a lecture course and a seminar in the Renaissance—and, until recently, a course in Spenser, which has now been taken over by Associate Professor William Nelson. Until he became Da Ponte Professor Emeritus in June, 1950, Dino Bigongiari gave a course in Dante, which, though different in substance from that long offered by Fletcher, was its legitimate successor.

Professor Ernest Hunter Wright introduced into the curriculum in 1911 a course in the comparative study of the Romantic Movement,

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 16–20, 23–24. Practically all of the correspondence that has been cited here on the Spingarn episode is also to be found in the University Files.

which is now given by Professor Neff. The offering of the Department for the academic year 1952–53 included, besides the courses described above, the following courses in Comparative Literature:

World Perspectives in Modern Literature, by Padraic and Mary Colum
The European Novel in the Victorian Period, by Professor Nobbe
Modern Drama, by Professor Krutch
Classical Influences in European Literature, by Professor Highet
The Art of Poetry, by Professor Van Doren
Theories of Rhetoric and Poetry in Greece and Rome, by Professor Clark
Roman Drama in Translation, by Professor Highet
The Drama in Performance, by Dr. Pinthus
The Classical Drama and Its Influences, by Professor Hadas
Medieval Legends and Ballads, by Professor Loomis
Ideas, Social Movements and Artistic Tendencies in European Literature since the French Revolution, by Professor Neff

In other years Professor Susanne Nobbe has offered a course in English-German literary relations. No department in any other American university offers so rich and varied a program in Comparative Literature.

One of the recommendations which Professors Carpenter and Matthews made to President Butler in their suggestions for the development of the Department after the death of Professor Price in 1903 was the appointment of a specialist in Anglo-Saxon and medieval literature. Later it was decided to divide this broad field between two men. To teach Anglo-Saxon and the History of the English Language, George Philip Krapp was engaged in 1904. A graduate of Wittenberg College in Ohio in 1894, Krapp had taken his Ph.D. at the Johns Hopkins University in 1899. He had thereafter served as tutor and instructor in English and rhetoric at both Columbia and Teachers College until 1904, when he was given the title of lecturer in English and assigned to the teaching of Anglo-Saxon and English philology. His first courses were: "Anglo-Saxon, an introduction to the history of the English Language"; "Anglo-Saxon Literature, poetry and prose"; and "Anglo-Saxon lyric poetry: English of the Transition Period." This was a more extensive program of study in Anglo-Saxon than had ever before been offered in Columbia. It was matched, to be sure, by a similar program in the graduate schools of Harvard and Yale. In the next year Krapp added a course in The Principles of English Philology, and in 1906, Historical

English Grammar. When he resigned in 1908 to become a professor at the University of Cincinnati, some of his work was taken over temporarily by Harry Morgan Ayres of Harvard. In the fall of 1909, Otto Jespersen of Copenhagen, serving as Visiting Professor for the year, also taught some courses in linguistics.

Krapp returned to Columbia in 1910 as Professor of English; until his death in 1934 he shared the work in linguistics with Ayres and W. W. Lawrence. Although the courses were taught now by one and now by another of the three, the curriculum remained stable. It consisted of two semesters of elementary Anglo-Saxon, a half-course in Beowulf, usually taught by Professor Lawrence in the manner he had learned from Kittredge at Harvard; an advanced course in Anglo-Saxon, dealing largely with the work of Cynewulf, generally offered by Professor Krapp; a course in the history of the language; a course in Middle English; and a course in Chaucer. After Krapp's death in 1934, Professor Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie began to teach both the two-semester course in Anglo-Saxon and a course in the history of the language. In 1929 Dobbie had begun work as a full-time research assistant to Professor Krapp, who had started to edit the entire corpus of Anglo-Saxon poetry, under the title "Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records." Three volumes were published before Krapp's death and the unfinished manuscript of a fourth, *The Exeter Book*, was completed by Professor Dobbie in 1936. Dobbie then published in 1942, as Volume VI, *Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, and in 1953 completed Volume IV, containing editions of *Beowulf* and *Judith*. The series boldly projected by Krapp and ably edited first by him and then by Dobbie is a conspicuous monument of scholarship, most creditable to Columbia's reputation in this field.

Krapp's interests were not confined to the earlier aspects of the English language. He showed a scholarly concern for the later features of its development, as the following series of publications on the subject attests: *Modern English: Its Growth and Use* (1909), *The Rise of English Literary Prose* (1915), *Pronunciation of Standard English in America* (1919), *The English Language in America*, 2 vols. (1925), and *A Comprehensive Guide to Good English* (1927). It is important to note that Krapp's investigations into the distinctively American developments of the English language antedated those of H. L. Mencken by several years. The study of this aspect of linguistic history is being carried on by Assistant Professor Allen Walker Read, who also gives an undergraduate course in Anglo-Saxon and one in the history of the language.

The present offering of the Department in Anglo-Saxon study is much less substantial than was the case when part of the time of three professors was devoted to teaching Old English. It now consists of one half-course in the Anglo-Saxon language and one half-course in Beowulf. However, every candidate for the Ph.D. must pass a three-hour written examination in Anglo-Saxon and one of the same length in the history of the language. This decrease in the hours spent in the study of Anglo-Saxon at Columbia is matched by a similar development in other graduate schools of English. It marks a shifting of the earlier emphasis on philology imported from Germany to a study of the history of literature, the history of ideas, and other philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic aspects of literature. A similar tendency can be observed in the study of the language. The course in Middle English now attracts few students and the study of the history of linguistic developments since the beginning of the sixteenth century receives more and more emphasis.

It will be recalled that the second professor for whom Carpenter and Matthews recommended that provision be made in 1903 was one with an established reputation in research. William Allan Neilson, then an instructor in English at Harvard, who had made a remarkable record there as a graduate student and had already published in 1899 a fine work of scholarship entitled *The Origin and Sources of the Court of Love*, was chosen as the promising scholar needed in the Department. The first year he gave a course in Shakespeare and one in Chaucer, each devoted to severe study of the text, and a seminar for advanced graduate students on Scottish literature before the Reformation. The next year, in collaboration with W. W. Lawrence, he gave a course in medieval literature and a seminar in Problems in the Study of Shakespeare. He resigned in 1906 to return to Harvard as Professor of English. Although he taught only two years at Columbia, he established traditions in graduate teaching, particularly of Shakespeare, Chaucer, and medieval literature, which are active even today.

To fill the place left vacant by Neilson's resignation, Columbia called Ashley Thorndike, since 1902 a professor at Northwestern University. He came to Columbia in 1906 at the age of thirty-three as Professor of English and as Executive Officer of the Department, positions which he held for twenty-seven years until his sudden death in 1933. He had a talent for organization and administration and conducted the affairs of the Department with expert ease. He considered himself the actual Head and expected all communications with other Executive Officers to be

made through him. His was a benevolent dictatorship disguised as a democracy. When at the time of Brander's resignation efforts were made by other members of the Department to have Stuart Sherman chosen as his successor, Thorndike took umbrage and announced that his policy was not to add to the staff anyone from outside the University but to fill vacancies as they occurred by promoting younger teachers in the Department. This policy he maintained as long as he lived.

During his regime Thorndike made few changes in the courses offered to graduate students and few in the requirements for either the A.M. or the Ph.D. degree. He gave a kind of massive solidity to the Department and a sense of security to all of its members. He watched over the graduate students in an almost fatherly fashion. He was not a good lecturer, believing that the principal duty of a teacher of graduate students was to stimulate their research and through his own publication to set them a good example of scholarship. His Harvard doctoral dissertation, *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare* (1901) remains a landmark in Shakespeare scholarship and opened a new field of research in Jacobean drama. His next work, entitled *English Tragedy*, is also an important contribution to the history and development of the form. His later publications include *Shakespeare Theatre* (1916) which, though now superseded, established the foundation on which most subsequent studies of the Elizabethan stage have been built; *Literature in a Changing Age* (1920); *English Comedy* (1929); and *The Outlook for Literature* (1931). A signal honor was an invitation extended to him to deliver in 1927 the annual Shakespeare Lecture of the British Academy.

When Thorndike joined the staff in 1906 the graduate work was given by the following men:

Carpenter: Advanced composition, English literary criticism, literary and aesthetic theory.

Krapp: Various courses in Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, language and literature.

Lawrence: Beowulf, Chaucer, English Literature from 1200 to 1557. In 1908 Ayres joined the department and taught some of the linguistics.

Trent: English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Brewster: English prose in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Matthews: The courses in the drama which he had been giving for years, plus a course called Shakespeare as a Playwright.

Thorndike: English literature of the first half of the nineteenth century, English drama from the beginning to 1642, and a seminar in Shakespeare's Relation to the Contemporary Drama.

This curriculum remained practically unchanged for the twenty-seven years during which Thorndike was the Department's Executive Officer.

As deaths occurred among the staff, successors were appointed to continue the courses thus relinquished. At Carpenter's death in 1909, Professor John Erskine, assisted by Ernest Hunter Wright, took over the course in English composition and also established a new course in The English Lyric in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. A few years later Erskine was offering The Materials of Poetry and Problems in the Criticism of Poetry, natural courses for him to give since he had already published three volumes of poems.

After teaching for five years at Amherst College, Erskine had returned to his alma mater as Adjunct Professor in 1909. The next year he was made Associate Professor and, in 1916, Professor. From the first, half of his work was in the College, where he quickly became a popular teacher. His great service there was the invention and establishment of the two-year sequence based on the "Great Books," known as General Honors, in which upperclassmen read and discussed with instructors in small sections the great books of European literature, beginning with Homer and the Greek dramatists. He had to overcome strong opposition from the conservatives of his faculty before he could launch his enterprise. Their argument was that a college should give its undergraduates an exact knowledge of a few men and a few books instead of a superficial knowledge of many. Thanks to the very able young men drawn from a variety of departments who served as the first staff, the course was an immediate success. Its success owed much also to application and enthusiasm of the students. In the years that followed, admission to General Honors came to be regarded as a high privilege, eagerly sought after by many of the most promising upperclassmen. Wednesday evening after Wednesday evening, through the 1920s and early 1930s, staff and students demonstrated that the study and discussion of a wide range of books, representative of the most perceptive writings of the past, could, if skilfully guided, provide an intellectual experience which few of the participants would dismiss as "superficial."

Courses modeled on this Columbia innovation have been introduced

into many other colleges, notably the University of Chicago and St. John's College in Annapolis. In 1937, the Faculty of Columbia College, impressed by the results achieved in General Honors, took a pioneer step in the field of general education by introducing similar techniques of instruction and most of the same readings into the required work of the freshman year. The new course, known as Humanities A, quickly won the enthusiastic approval of both staff and students and soon was attracting the attention of liberal arts colleges in many parts of the country. Five years ago, the Rockefeller Foundation established three fellowships to enable staff members from other colleges to come to Columbia to study the operation of Humanities A and Contemporary Civilization A, the corresponding introductory course in the social sciences. At present, the tradition inaugurated by Erskine in 1920 is perpetuated not only in the prescribed Humanities course but also in the advanced elective, formerly General Honors and now called Colloquium on Important Books.

In 1925 Erskine published a witty and indecorous satire, *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, which immediately became a best-seller. His many attempts to repeat the success of this volume in *Galahad*, *Adam and Eve*, and other satires of a similar sort were comparative failures. In 1928 Erskine took an indefinite leave of absence from Columbia to become president of the Juilliard School of Music, an office which he held until 1937. Thereafter, until his death in 1951, he served on the Board of Trustees of the Juilliard Musical Foundation.

When Brander Matthews retired in 1924, Professor George Clinton Densmore Odell, who had been teaching composition in the College since 1895 and had been a Professor since 1906, took over the teaching of Restoration and modern drama to graduates. He also succeeded to the title of Professor of Dramatic Literature. At Brander's death in 1939 his former chair was named the Brander Matthews Professorship of Dramatic Literature (since Odell's retirement in 1939 held by Joseph Wood Krutch). Odell's approach to the theater was like Brander's, for his interest was centered in plays as they appeared on the stage and he always emphasized the importance of the actor, and particularly the actress, in bringing a play to life in the theater. However, he did not attempt to duplicate Brander's courses, but offered until his retirement English Drama, 1660 to 1839, and Modern Drama.

His publications reveal the wide range and meticulous accuracy of his knowledge of the theater. In 1920 appeared a two-volume work entitled *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving*, a complete account of all

the productions of Shakespeare's plays from the Restoration to the time of Irving, told with delightful humor. His *Annals of the New York Stage*, in fifteen volumes, is one of the monumental achievements of American scholarship. He was uniquely fitted for the research culminating in this work. He came to Columbia College in 1884 from Newburgh because, as he explained, only in New York would he be able to satisfy his voracious appetite for the theater. From that time until shortly before his death he was New York's most consistent patron of the theater. The research which preceded his *Annals* covered every sort of theatrical activity in what is now greater New York and was conducted with the most painstaking efforts at accuracy. He is said to have spent an entire week in a successful search for the middle name of an obscure clown active in the early years of the nineteenth century.

American literature was first taught on the graduate level at Columbia in 1914–15 by Erskine, who offered in that year a full course devoted to the works of Poe, Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Whitman. Erskine emphasized the relation of these men's work to European literature and stressed in particular their influence abroad. In the years 1914–15 and 1915–16, Trent in the first semester and Assistant Professor Carl Van Doren in the second offered Studies in American Literature. For a number of years thereafter Carl Van Doren taught a full course in American literature, one year specializing in New England literature, another in American prose and fiction and so on. Van Doren was a stimulating lecturer, one of the most popular and most effective on the staff. Later he gave two full survey courses in the subject: lectures on the characteristics of American literature since the Civil War, which usually attracted an enrollment of more than two hundred students; and a historical survey of American literature from the earliest period.

In 1925, when Professor Ralph Rusk was added to the Department as a second specialist in American literature, he divided the instruction in the field with Carl Van Doren—an arrangement which continued until 1930, when the latter severed all connection with the University. From that date until his designation as Professor Emeritus in 1954, Rusk has had charge of the work in American literature and the direction of research in the field. His special interest has been Emerson and his recent *Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* is recognized as the standard biography of that worthy and a monument of scholarship in American Literature. He is at present editing the fifth volume of Emerson's correspondence. In 1949 Lionel Trilling began to offer two courses in the subject, one

a lecture course in recent American literature, the other a seminar, given in collaboration with Professor Jacques Barzun of the History Department, in modern and contemporary American literature. In 1952 Professor Lewis Leary, who had served in the previous year as a Visiting Professor from Duke University, became a permanent member of the staff as a second full Professor of American Literature.

The Department has consistently resisted the adoption of a curriculum in so-called "American Civilization," now current in a number of American universities, notably Harvard. According to this scheme a candidate for an advanced degree studies in connection with American Literature, American History, American Philosophy, American Art, and American Music to the almost complete exclusion of the study of English and Continental literature. Our Department is strongly of the opinion that this is an infelicitous moment to isolate the study of American life from developments elsewhere in Western civilization.

On May 24, 1933, following the death of Professor Ashley Thorndike, Professor Ernest Hunter Wright was chosen to serve as Executive Officer of the Department, a position which he held until his retirement from active service on June 30, 1947. During his regime the Department was almost entirely reconstituted. In the decade 1924 to 1934 it had lost by death Professors Matthews, Baldwin, Krapp, and Thorndike, and by retirement Franklin T. Baker, Professor of the English Language and Literature in Teachers College, and Professors Erskine, Lawrence, Brewster, and Fletcher. The vacancies left by this large exodus were filled partly by promotions of men already on the staff and partly by the addition of the following Professors from outside the University: Joseph Wood Krutch, a specialist in the drama since the Restoration; Oscar James Campbell, a Shakespeare scholar; Marjorie Hope Nicolson, a specialist in the history of ideas, particularly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; James L. Clifford, an authority on the literature of the eighteenth century, particularly on Doctor Johnson and his circle; and Alfred Harbage, an authority on Shakespeare and the English drama. Maurice Valency was appointed Associate Professor to take charge of the instruction in the Renaissance in Italy, France, Spain, and England. Professor Wright's building of the Department was so successful that when, in the year of his retirement the Association of American Universities conducted a rating of English departments in American colleges and universities, the Columbia English Department was unanimously placed first in its list.

Besides the new permanent appointments, the offering of the Department was enriched during these years by Visiting Professors both from abroad and from sister American institutions:

1923–24	Raymond Macdonald Alden (Spring Session)
1927–28	Albert Feuillerat
1928–29	Louis Cazamian
1929–30	Edgar Allison Peers
1930–31	Sten Bodvar Liljegren
1932–33	Herbert J. C. Grierson
1934–36	Frederick S. Boas
1936–37	John S. P. Tatlock (Spring Session)
1943–44	F. P. Wilson (Winter Session)
1945–46	Gordon Sherman Haight (Associate Professor)
1948–49	Basil Willey (Winter Session)

Since 1947 Associate Professor William Nelson has been called to the graduate staff, and three Assistant Professors have been appointed to the staff of Columbia College: Richard V. Chase, Jr., Frederick W. Dupee, and Edward S. Le Conte. The two former have recently been promoted to associate professorships. Since the retirement of Professor Harrison R. Steeves as Departmental Representative in Columbia College, Professor Charles W. Everett has held that important executive post.

The character and procedure of work for the Master's degree was reorganized and strengthened during Professor's Wright regime. Candidates were graduated in the First, Second, and Third Class on the basis of their achievement. Over the years not more than 2 percent of the candidates have taken the degree in the First Class, an honor equivalent to *summa cum laude* and eagerly sought for. A student winning the Master's degree only in the Third Class is discouraged from proceeding further with his graduate studies in our Department. Another innovation was the establishment of a number of so-called proseminars for candidates for the Master's degree, each consisting of a group of not more than twenty students specializing in the same field. The proseminars are both discussion groups and centers of instruction in bibliography and such methods of research as the student will find it necessary to employ in preparing his Master's essay.

Another achievement of Professor Wright was the establishment of the English Graduate Union, a sort of honor society for advanced

candidates for the Ph.D. degree. Conceived and organized in the spring of 1928, it was established a year later with 186 members, 40 of whom were life members drawn from the English faculty, the graduate body, and the Ph.D. alumni. The Union has had a continuing and flourishing existence from that day to this. Starting with an endowment of $1,719 which has now risen to $10,000, the organization has received the benefit of one bequest of $60,000 to be used for graduate fellowships, and it is included in the wills of a number of persons for many times that amount.

Since 1947, Professor Oscar James Campbell has served as Executive Officer of the Department. The growth in the number of the graduate students has been so large of late that the administrative burdens of the office have been divided by the appointment of Professor Marjorie Nicolson as Departmental Representative of the graduate branch of the Department. Most of the general direction of graduate students, particularly of doctoral candidates, is in her hands.

The growth in the number of graduate students in the Department may be illustrated by a few comparative figures. In 1899–1900, the third year after the move to Morningside Heights, there were 11 matriculates for advanced degrees in English. During the next four years candidacies totaled 31, 41, 73, and 93 respectively. The increase over the succeeding decades was fairly continuous, but in the period immediately following World War II it became fantastically rapid. From the comparatively modest figure of 93 in 1903–4, the numbers rose to 1,106 in 1949–50. More recently, total candidacies have reflected the decline in the attendance of veterans exercising their privileges under the G.I. Bill of Rights. In 1952–53, 793 men and women were studying in the Department for the A.M. or the Ph.D. degree.

Until 1923 candidates for the Master's degree were required to take final examinations in their courses and one three-hour examination in the entire field of English literature. They were also required to write a substantial essay directed by one of the professors. Beginning in that year, the candidates were excused from course examinations. Instead they took one four-hour written examination in the entire field and one in each of two special fields. Later the two special fields were reduced to one. Another 1923 innovation was the appointment of eight half-time instructors to direct work on the Master's essays, a task subsequently delegated to four full-time instructors. In 1940 the system was greatly modified by the establishment of the proseminars already mentioned, of which there were fifteen in the academic year 1952–53.

Although the number of candidates for the Master's degree has now

become very large, their training remains adequate, largely through the direction given to each student by his teacher in the proseminar. The instructor helps the student to choose the subject for his essay (which is not designed to be an original contribution to knowledge), confers with him constantly while the paper is being written, and rejects or accepts the final draft. He also serves as an unofficial adviser to each of his students in any matter, educational or personal, that the student may wish to bring to his attention.

In 1880, simultaneously with the establishment of the School of Political Science, provision was made for graduate instruction under the Faculty of Arts in a number of subjects, among which were English literature and the Anglo-Saxon language and literature. The supervision of this work was transferred to the newly created Faculty of Philosophy in 1890. In the years immediately following, doctoral degrees were awarded to George Clinton Densmore Odell (1893), Charles Sears Baldwin (1894), and Arthur Beatty (1897), subsequently Professor of English in the University of Wisconsin. Since 1899 the number of Ph.D. degrees granted in the English Department each year has risen from one in 1900 to 19 in 1950 and to 30 in 1953.

The training of the large number of candidates for the Ph.D. imposes on the present limited staff a very heavy burden. Each candidate, after showing competence in French, German, and Latin and after satisfying the requirement of a reading knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and passing a three-hour written examination in the history of the English language, must pass a two-and-a-half-hour oral examination conducted by a committee drawn from the Faculty of Philosophy, including five members of the Department of English. The candidate presents one major subject and three minors, one of which must be on the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Milton and the scholarship concerning the author selected, and one on a subject in comparative literature—usually the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the Romantic Movement. The staff conducted 53 of these "Doctor's Orals" during the academic year 1951–52.

Candidates for the Ph.D. in Comparative Literature have a slightly different choice of subjects for the examination. Their major subject must be a period or a subject in European literature—such as the Renaissance, the history of the drama, and so forth. The major author may be, in addition to the three English authors just listed, such important figures in Continental literature as Dante, Molière, Goethe, or Calderón. The two other minors must be chosen from a second period in Continental

literature and one period in either English or American literature. A student who is permitted to take the Ph.D. in Comparative Literature must prove his mastery of one foreign language to the satisfaction of the department concerned. At least one representative of that foreign language department is always present at the oral examination of the candidate.

The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Greek and Latin, has also established a program in Comparative Literature for students with a classical foundation. Each student seeking admission into one of these programs of study must demonstrate his ability to read with ease either Latin or Greek and must show some acquaintance with the other ancient language. His choice of subjects for the oral examination follows the pattern of the other programs in comparative literature, except that one period—or subject—may be in the history of classical literature—such as the Ancient Epic, Latin Literature of the Silver Age —and the author presented for examination may be one in classical literature.

In 1949 the Department, recognizing the great demand for teachers trained in the arts of the theater, established a program leading to the Master's degree and one leading to the Ph.D. for students anticipating a career in one of the departments of drama now established in many American universities. Candidates for a Master's degree must take twelve hours of work in the history of the drama and twelve in the arts of the theater, with the remaining six hours elective among other approved graduate courses. The requirement includes a final examination at the end of residence in the theater arts and one in the history of the drama. A candidate for the Ph.D. who is preparing himself for teaching in a department of drama may present, as one of the minors for his oral examination, the Arts of the Theater.

With the increasing success of the School of Dramatic Arts it has become possible, beginning in 1953–54, to transfer the supervision of candidates for the Master's degree with a major interest in this field to the School itself. Under this arrangement a student may matriculate for the newly established degree of Master of Fine Arts, to be awarded upon the successful completion of the requirements already described.

A definite philosophy of education has been expressed in the instruction given by the Department throughout its long and varied history. It has taken as a guide the ideals of French literary scholarship rather than the severe philological methods imported from Germany. The search and discovery of sources of literary works has never been an

absorbing interest here. No professor at Columbia would ever have been the recipient of the lyrical praise George Santayana once bestowed on Professor Kittredge of Harvard who could "trace e'en Hamlet's silence to its source." Many of our courses now deal with criticism, both of the conventional and the "new" sort. They are based not only on biographical facts, but also on social, psychological, and philosophical concepts and movements. The study of the history of ideas in its relation to works of literature has recently become a popular method of study. Unfortunately, the courses given in former years in the history of criticism have lost their preferred position in our curriculum, to the detriment of the preparation of our students for sound teaching of literature. This loss we expect to correct in the near future. In the meantime, courses in applied criticism, such as the one given by Professor William Y. Tindall in the careful scrutiny of the texts of writers like Yeats and Joyce, partly fill the gap.

One of the results of the development of new methods of criticism has been the shifting of our emphasis from the earlier fields of English literature to the modern and contemporary. For example, instead of the four or five courses in Anglo-Saxon offered in the days of Krapp, Lawrence, and Ayres, we now offer only two half-courses. The course in Middle English language and literature is taught only every other year, and is commonly elected by not more than three or four students. But full courses in the history of the language and in Chaucer are required of every candidate for the Ph.D. degree and, with a few exceptions, a full course in medieval literature, including that of the Continent. The new emphasis on modern literary developments now enables a student to specialize in either American or English literature.

The undergraduate branch of the Department has always taught literature as one of the humanities—as an important contribution to a wise and satisfying life. It has never considered its instruction as preparation for careers in journalism, advertising, or public relations. In a similar fashion, the graduate division of the Department has always conceived its function to be the training of scholars, critics, and men of letters. This it believes is the best way of making its students competent to teach college undergraduates any branch of English and to illumine their speciality with a broad knowledge of the entire field. We have never considered specific training in pedagogy to be our business.

For this attitude we have not escaped criticism. It is true that Professor Baldwin regularly offered a course in the college teaching of English composition. Some members of the Department strongly favor

the revival of this course and the adding to our curriculum of another devoted to the college teaching of literature. The opponents of this program regard it as unnecessary, believing that one best learns how to teach by teaching under the supervision and direction of the members of one's department. Our graduate students receive some of this sort of experience in the instructors' criticism of their performances in the Master's proseminar and in one of the advanced seminars which each candidate for the Ph.D. is required to elect.

A number of problems loom large as the Department faces the future. It realizes that it must obtain the cooperation of the administration in its effort to delimit the number of its candidates for advanced degrees, for its registration figure is twice as large as that of any other department under the Graduate Faculties. Although pleased that so many men and women are choosing a key subject in the humanities for their life interest and appreciative of the implied compliment of their choice of a university, the now badly overworked staff is fighting a rigorous battle to protect the high standards of scholarship which have always characterized graduate instruction in English at Columbia.

Within the next two or three years five of the most distinguished Professors in the Department will retire from active service. Some of the vacancies caused by their departure can be filled by the promotion of men now teaching. Others will have to be filled by professors called from other institutions, and because the salaries at Columbia are no longer higher than elsewhere and the living expenses of a family in New York exceed those at sister institutions, the recruiting of new men from abroad is becoming more and more difficult. If this and other problems, such as the need for expansion of library facilities, can be solved, the English Department should be able not only to maintain its high position in the profession but also to add to its present distinction.

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